Indian Citizenship to Sri Lankan Tamils

1040. SHRI A. SAMPATH : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether several Sri Lankan Tamils of Indian Origin who came to India since 1977 had urged the Government for the grant of permanent Indian citizenship;

(b) whether they had suggested grant of identity cards till their citizenship request is decided;

(c) whether the Government are considering their request sympathetically; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (d) A copy of a representation from the Welfare Association of Sri Lankan Tamils of Indian Origin has been received in this Ministry. The matter is under consideration.

[Translation]

Declaration of Bhopal as Gas Affected Area

1041. SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the last time when the Prime Minister visited Bhopal, representations were given to him to declare the entire Bhopal as gas affected area for making arrangements to provide assistance on that basis;

(b) whether such proposal had been under consideration of the Union Government for the last six-seven years; and

(c) the decision taken by the Union Government on the representation given to the Prime Minister?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The representation is under examination.

[English]

Israel's Assistance to Kerala for Agricultural Production

1042. SHRI T. GOVINDAN : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have any proposal to assist the Government of Kerala for increasing the agricultural production in view of the fact that even country like Israel has shown keen interest to send an expert delegation to explore the possibilities in this field;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) No proposal has been received from Israel to send an expert delegation to explore the possibilities for increasing the agricultural production in Kerala.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Ban on Inter-State Movement of Wheat

1043. SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are planning to ban the inter-state movement of wheat by the traders and farmers from the wheat surplus regions of Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Global Environmental Protection

1044. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Western nations attempted to introduce new issues in AGENDA-21 on global environmental protection;

(b) if so, the contentious issues which the Western nations wanted to reopen; and

(c) the stand taken by India to flay the Western move on Agenda 21?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. During the United Nations General Assembly Special Session held in New York from 23-27 June, 1997, the Western nations had attempted to include the contentious issues like human rights, good governance and labour standards in Agenda 21. This attempt was successfully resisted by India and other developing countries. India categorically stated that it will not accept a re-negotiation of Agenda 21 through the introduction of new issues. This was recognised by all and was also reflected in the document adopted at the conclusion of the Session.

[Translation]

Travelling by Policemen in DTC Buses

1045. SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether an agreement has been signed between the Delhi Transport Corporation and the Ministry for providing the facilities of free journey in the DTC buses to Delhi Police personnel, Delhi Armed Police personnel and other police personnel working in the National Capital Territory of Delhi;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Ministry make payment of certain amount each month to the Delhi Transport Corporation under the agreement;

(d) if so, the amount paid each month; and

(e) if not, the grounds on which the police personnel enjoy free travel facility in the DTC buses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (e) The practice of free travel by the Delhi Policemen was introduced around 1965 at the instance of DTC Authorities as the presence of Policemen in buses acts as a deterrent and helps in crime prevention. This arrangement was subject to the following conditions:

(a) The policemen so travelling will not occupy a seat, if there are standing passengers.

(b) The policemen will not travel on the foot-board of the bus.

(c) They will board and alight from the bus only at the recognised bus stops.

(d) The policemen travelling in a bus excess of two lower-subordinates entitled to travel free, shall pay the prescribed fares.

(e) No lower-subordinate in plain clothes will travel in a DTC bus without paying the requisite fare.

[English]

Reforms Suggested by World Bank for the Sugar Industry

1046. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Bank has recently suggested reforms in the sugar industry of the country;

(b) if so, the nature of reforms suggested;

(c) the likely repercussion of the reforms for this industry;

(d) whether the Government have conveyed these reforms to the industry; and

(e) if so, the reaction of the sugar industry thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) and (b) According to the document sent by the World Bank in April 1997 on Indian Sugar Industry, the nature of reforms suggested is that a package of policy reforms would be needed to capture the full effects of productivity, growth and encourage growers and producers to close the technological gap. The Policy package would entail maintaining free sugar imports (and exports), lifting the domestic barriers to entry in sugar milling, eliminating the dual market tax and reforming cane pricing policies. Other measures would involve rationalizing the tax regime in the industry. The elimination of input and capital subsidies would complement the policy package, although its implementation and ramifications can extend well beyond the scope of this industry.

(c) to (e) The Government had already set up a High Powered Committee on 14th March, 1997 to examine and study various aspects of sugar industry and sugarcane cultivation and to give suggestions thereon for